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EPITOME OF MATERIALISM.

WHAT is Materialism, asks the religionist or spiritualist; is it not something horrible as a system of faith and vicious in its adoption? No! it is the very essence of virtue and of whatever is good to mankind. It is the science of matter. It is chemistry, geology, astronomy; and even *astrology* is a metaphysical science of matter. It is the science of mineral, of vegetable, of animal matter; it is the science of man, of every other animal, of the relation of one to another and of each and all to vegetable and to mineral matter. Spiritualism is credulity, phantasmal, false, and, as such, vicious; materialism is knowledge of matter, knowledge of realities, and, as Stewart has well observed in the accompanying lecture, admits not of the notion of *belief*. The unbeliever has been called the sceptic; *but the real sceptic is the believer*.

Yes, Christians; yes, Spiritualists; belief is the only scepticism. Belief expresses doubt. Knowledge expresses conviction, demonstrable evidence, to which the word *belief* has no application. Belief expresses a state of mind that has not attained knowledge: such is the belief of Spiritualism. Materialism is knowledge, the knowledge that knows the proper point at which to confess ignorance. A proper confession of ignorance is the very summit of knowledge. We are unwise only in talking of creatures of the imagination, of which we have no other knowledge than that they are such creatures. We are not unwise because we are ignorant; but because we are unwilling to admit that we are ignorant. Ignorance of matter is the natural state of man: his wisdom is all an artificial, ephemeral acquirement, and the greatest humility and the greatest dignity which he can exhibit is to know and to confess his ignorance of matter and artificially to seek to remove it. Such is an *epitome of Materialism*; and see reader, see Christian what a horrid system it is!

But, the grand religious complaint is, that this sort of knowledge, this knowing of one's ignorance, this system of materialism, overthrows all the dogmas of religion. It does so. And it proves, at the same time, that it is wise and virtuous to overthrow them, inasmuch as they must be false, and, being false, vicious and mischievous. Until it can be proved, that it is wise

and proper for the few to cheat the many and to live in luxuriant idleness on their produce and on that system of cheat, religion cannot be virtuously defended, nor materialism virtuously opposed.

Exclamations of horror are made by the ignorant and credulous against men of better knowledge; they are never made by the more wise against the more ignorant. Men really in search of knowledge can examine and pity the ignorance of others; but they never condemn it as horrible. It is where the prejudices of ignorance are shocked by flashes of light, by astounding proofs of their bad foundation, or by the mere assertion that they are ill-founded, that offensive exclamations are used and bad feeling excited. It is where ignorance recoils upon itself, and cherishes its own attachments, in resistance of proofs of their invalidity, that matters of opinion excite indignation and lead to animosity among mankind. It is where profit arises from institutions ill-founded, that persecutions are raised against rising knowledge and against individuals honest enough to investigate and speak freely of the merits of such institutions. That which is well-founded and honestly meant fears no knowledge, no investigation, is not offended, persecutes not, and gladly improves when plans of improvement are presented. Such is Materialism.

Materialism, as the science of sciences, the source of arts, though embracing that which is most abstruse, is the most simple and most intelligible to young minds of all the sciences. It should be the first point in the education of the child; and the last effort of old age should be to extend it. It associates itself with nothing metaphysical, it has no phantasms; though not to be grasped by the human mind as a whole, it constantly presents itself to that mind as an object claiming further investigation. All the knowledge, all the wisdom of man is embraced in the science of Materialism. It teaches him virtue by explaining to him the materially bad consequences of vice. Though physical in its general sense, it embraces the science of morals. A sound moralist must be a Materialist. Morals express the conduct of the man with regard to animals, and to their claims to property, to the materialities of animal life. In short, the man who is not a Materialist, is just nothing at all in point of human knowledge; he can only have knowledge as far as he knows matter: he can only be moral as far as he knows his real duties towards living animal matter.

R. C.

TO MR. CARLILE, FOR "THE REPUBLICAN."

LETTER I.

SIR,
IN 1812, Dr. Jones, author of *The Greek and English Lexicon*, published a work entitled *Ecclesiastical Researches*, in which he professes to prove that Philo and Josephus were not only believers in Christianity, but are historians and apologists of it. This book being very remote from the apprehensions even of the learned, and pointing to consequences at variance with the popular belief, excited no notice whatever, though there be reason to believe that individuals here and there have seen the work, and approve of it. Mr. Ward seems of this number; but this gentleman has acted dishonourably, for he has pirated it without noticing the author, and even garbled it evidently for the purpose of disguise. I however approve, Sir, of your publishing his paper; and with Dr. Jones's leave, I submit, in a concentrated form, the substance of his reasonings through your journal to the public, with a view to make the subject generally known, and to elicit such objections as you, or those who think alike with you, may make on the subject.

It would be a matter of high interest and importance, if we saw transmitted from antiquity by some competent judge, a full and faithful delineation of the men who had received religious instruction from Jesus Christ and his Apostles. Such a delineation would give full evidence to the claims of those holy men as divine teachers; and place the influence of the Gospel in its proper light, by shewing its happy effects on the lives and conversation of those who received it while yet *new* and *uncorrupted*. The desideratum thus devoutly to be wished is actually preserved for us by the providence of God. Philo, a Jew of Alexandria, contemporary with Christ and his Apostles, and distinguished alike for talents, eloquence, and virtues, has at full length drawn the character of the first Christian converts in Judea and Egypt. *Philo* means a *friend*, which, conformably to a general practice among the early believers, was, there is reason to believe, changed into *Theophilus*, or a *friend of God*. And this probably is the very man to whom Luke, who wrote in Egypt, dedicates his Gospel. It is difficult in a translation to preserve the enthusiasm and energy of the original, but the following version faithfully conveys its meaning:—

"Palestine and Syria are not unproductive of good and great men, compared even with the populous nation of the Jews. These, exceeding four thousand, are called *Esseans*, which name,

though not with strict analogy, corresponds in Greek to the term HOLY, for they have attained the highest holiness in the worship of God, and that not by sacrificing animals, but by cultivating purity of heart. They live principally in villages, and avoid the towns, being sensible that as disease is generated by corruption, so an indelible impression is produced in the soul by the contagion of society. Some of these men cultivate the ground, others pursue the arts of peace and such employments as are beneficial to themselves without injury to their neighbours. They seek neither to hoard silver nor gold, nor to inherit ample estates, in order to gratify prodigality and avarice, but are content with the mere necessities of life. They are the only people who, though destitute of money and possessions, and that more from choice than the untowardness of fortune, felicitate themselves as rich, deeming riches to consist not in amplitude of possessions, but as is really the case, in frugality and contentment. Among them no one can be found who manufactures darts, arrows, corselets, shields, or any other weapon useful in war, nor even such instruments as are easily perverted to evil purposes in times of peace. They decline trade, commerce, and navigation altogether, as incentives to covetousness and luxury; nor have they any slaves among them, but all are free, and all in their turn administer to others. They condemn the owners of slaves as tyrants, who violate the principles of justice and equality, and impiously transgress the dictates of nature, which, like a common parent, has begotten and educated all men alike, and made them brethren not in name only but in sincerity and truth. But avarice conspiring against nature, bursts her bonds, thus purchasing alienation instead of kindredship, and hatred in the room of friendship.

“As to learning, they leave that branch of it which is called *logic*, as not necessary to the acquisition of virtue, to fierce disputants about words; and cultivate natural philosophy only so far as respects the existence of God, and the creation of the universe. Other parts of natural philosophy they give up to vain and subtile metaphysicians, as really surpassing the powers of men. But *moral* philosophy they carefully study conformably to the established laws of their country, the excellence of which the human mind can hardly comprehend without the inspiration of God.

“These laws they study at all times, but more especially on the Sabbath. Regarding the seventh day as holy, they abstain on it from all other works, and assemble in those sacred places which are called synagogues, arranging themselves according to their age, the younger below his senior, with a deportment grave, becoming, and attentive. Then one of them taking *the Bible*, reads a portion of it, the more obscure parts of which are explained by some other more skilful person. For most of the Scriptures they interpret in that symbolical sense, which they have zealously

copied from the patriarchs. The topics of instruction are piety, holiness, and righteousness; domestic and political economy; the knowledge of things, good, bad, and indifferent; what objects ought to be pursued, and what to be avoided. In discussing these subjects, the ends they have in view, and to which they refer as so many rules to guide them, are the love of God, the love of virtue, and the love of men. Of their love to God, they give innumerable proofs, by leading a life of continued purity, unstained by oaths and falsehoods, by regarding him as the author of every good, and the cause of no evil. They evince their attachment to virtue by their freedom from avarice, from ambition, from sensual pleasures; by their frugality, simplicity, and contentment; by their humility, their regard to the laws, and other similar virtues. Their love to man is evinced by their benignity, their equity, and their liberality, of which it is not improper to give a short account, though no language can adequately describe it. In the first place, there exists among them no house, however private, which is not open to the reception of all the rest, and not only the members of the same society assemble under the same domestic roof, but even strangers of the same persuasion have free admission to join them. There is but one treasure, whence all derive subsistence, and not only their provisions, but their clothes, are for common property. Such mode of living under the same roof, and of dieting at the same table, cannot, in fact, be proved to have been adopted by any other description of men. And no wonder, since even the daily labourer keeps not for his own use the produce of his toil, but imparts it to the common stock, and thus furnishes each member with the right to use for himself the profits earned by others.

“ The sick are not despised or neglected, because they are no longer capable of useful labour; but they live in ease and affluence, receiving from the treasury whatever their disorders or their exigencies require. The aged too among them are loved, revered, and attended as parents by affectionate children; and a thousand hands and hearts prop their tottering years with comforts of every kind. Such are the champions of virtue, which philosophy, without the parade of Grecian oratory, produces, proposing as the end of their institutions, the performance of those laudable actions, which destroy slavery and render freedom invincible.

“ This effect is evinced by the many powerful men who are against the *Esseans* in their own country, in consequence of differing from them in principles and sentiments. Some of these persecutors, being eager to surpass the fierceness of untamed beasts, omit no measure that may gratify their cruelty; and they cease not to sacrifice whole flocks of those within their power, or, like butchers, to tear their limbs in pieces, until themselves are brought to that justice which superintends the affairs of men.

Others of these persecutors cause their snarling fury to assume a different form. Indulging a spirit of unrelenting cruelty they address their victims with gentleness; display their intolerant spirit with affected mildness of speech, thus resembling dogs, when going to inflict an envenomed wound. By these means they occasion irremediable evils, and leave behind them, throughout whole communities, monuments of their impiety and hatred to men in the ever-memorable calamities of the sufferers. Yet not one of these furious persecutors, whether open or disguised, have been able to substantiate any accusation against this band of holy men. On the other hand, all men, captivated with their integrity and honour, unite with them as those who truly enjoy the freedom and independence of nature, admiring their communion and liberality, which language cannot describe, and which is the surest pledge of a perfect and happy life."—See Philo, vol. 2, p. 445, Ed. Mangey; or p. 868.

Our author having thus described the holy men of Palestine and Syria, proceeds in a subsequent book to give an account of those who flourished in Egypt, of whom he had a personal knowledge, having been educated for some time in their monasteries.—“Having spoken,” says he, “of the *Esseans* who as preferring practice engage in the duties of life; and, who, in all respects, or to use less invidious language, in most respects surpass other men, I next advance, pursuant to the thread of my subject, to give a description of those who embrace a *contemplative life*. Not suffering the partialities of friendship to exaggerate their virtues, as is the practice with poets and historians, in the absence of fair and honourable deeds, but honestly adhering to the letter of the truth, which the most eloquent in this instance can hope adequately to delineate. The object of those philosophers is manifest, from the title which they assume. The men and the women call themselves *Therapeutæ*, or *healers*, and this with propriety as professing a medical art superior to that which is practised in the world: for the latter profess to heal only the bodies, while the former, cure the souls of men, when seized with disorders fierce, and scarcely remediable; when occupied by lusts and depraved indulgences, by ignorance, iniquity, and an innumerable multitude of other vices and bad passions, or they so designate themselves as having learnt from nature, and the holy laws of Moses, to worship that Great Being, who, in regard to his nature, is more simple and undivided than unity, and as being one, gave birth to the very idea of unity. The persons who profess this art embrace it not from education, nor yet merely from the persuasion of others, but are seized with the love of heaven, being filled, like the devotees of Bacchus or Cybele, with enthusiasm, to see the Supreme Object of their desire. Thinking themselves already dead to the world, they desire only a blessed immortal existence. They, therefore, from choice,

appoint their sons, their daughters, or some other relatives or friends, as their heirs; and while yet living bequeath to them the free possession of their goods. For it behoves them, who, themselves, are enriched with spiritual wealth, to leave for such as are not enlightened, the riches of this blind world. Having thus disengaged themselves of the toils of wealth, and having no other snares to entice them, they flee without a look behind them—bidding farewell to brothers, sons, parents, and wives; to numerous relations and affectionate companions; to the country in which they were educated, and which long familiarity, by the most powerful ties, had endeared to their hearts. But they do not remove to another city, as they seek true freedom, the freedom of the mind, and not like ill-fated slaves, a mere change of masters. For every town, even the best regulated, abounds with commotions, crimes, and disorders, intolerable to him who has once felt the charms of wisdom. They fixed their habitations on the outside of cities, in gardens and villages, seeking retirement, not, I conceive, from hatred of mankind, but to avoid a religious intercourse with those who differ from them in opinions and manners.

“ This society now prevails throughout the habitable globe, the members of it thinking it their duty to share with Greek and barbarians the consummate blessings which themselves enjoy. But it prevails more particularly in the provinces of Egypt. The houses in which they assemble, are built in a very humble manner, and in each habitation is a sacred apartment called a *monastery*, in which, when alone, they perform the mysteries of a holy life. They are accustomed to pray each day in the morning, and in the evening, asking at the rising sun, a blessing on the day, that true blessing which illumines the mind with heavenly light; and at its setting, that their souls, now exonerated from the load of sensual objects, and encompassed with their own enclosure, as with the silence and solemnity of a sacred court, might investigate the truth. They spend the whole interval from morning to evening in religious exercises, reading the holy scriptures, and unfolding their symbolical meaning, according to that mode of interpretation which they have derived from their fathers. For the words they conceive, though expressing a literal sense, convey also a figurative one, addressed to the understanding. They possess also the commentaries of those sages, who, being the founders of the sect, left behind them numerous monuments of the allegorical style. These they use as models of allegory and composition, so that they not only employ themselves in mystic contemplation, but compose in honour of God, odes and hymns in all the variety of measures, which the solemnity of religion admits.

“ For six days each man continues in his separate apartment, without passing the threshold, or casting a look on the things

without. On the seventh day, having collected into one assembly, they seat themselves with a grave deportment, according to their age. Then one of the elders, more skilful than the rest, addresses them with grave looks, and a voice expressive of sedateness, intelligence and thought, being not desirous to display powers of language, like the orators and sophists of the day; but to express moral truths, thoroughly digested with a sobriety and accuracy, that might not only glide over the ear, but reach the heart, and remain lasting principles of conduct.

"They regard *temperance* as the foundation on which the other virtues can be raised in the soul. No one eats or drinks, until the sun sits, as they think the pursuit of wisdom the only meet employment of the day, and the mere support of the body the suitable work of darkness. Hence they devote to the former all the hours of light, and to the latter but a small portion of the night. Some in whom the thirst of knowledge predominates, do not, till after three day's abstinence, feel the necessity of support, while a few so feed on the rich and delicate viands which wisdom supplies, as to abstain double that time, and then barely taste refreshment, being accustomed, as they say of the grasshopper, to feed on air, whose song, it is presumed, assuages the pain of hunger. Looking upon the *Sabbath* in the highest sense a sacred festival, they deem it worthy of extraordinary reverence, in which, after providing for the soul, they alleviate the body and release it with all the beasts of burden, from their daily labours. They eat no food, more costly than coarse bread, seasoned with salt, to which the more delicate add hyssop, in the room of meat, and drink no liquid but the clear water of the stream. Thus they satisfy hunger and thirst, those imperious appetites, to which nature has subjected the race of man, offering them no farther gratification than what is merely necessary to support life. For they eat only so as not to hunger, and drink that they might not thirst, avoiding plenitude as prejudicial both to the body, and to the mind. Their clothing, like their houses, is mean and simple, as intended only to protect them from the extremes of cold and heat. Their chief object is to practice humility, being convinced that as falsehood is the root of pride, freedom from pride is the offspring of truth. Falsehood and truth, indeed, they regard as two copious fountains, from the former of which flow evils of every kind; from the latter emanate all the virtues, human and divine."—Page 471, or 889.

Such is the character which Philo gives of a certain race of holy men, who at that time rose in Palestine and Egypt. My next object is to prove that these were John the Baptist, Jesus of Nazareth, his twelve apostles, and their immediate followers in Judea, and the adjacent provinces. This will be the subject of my next letter.

I remain, Sir, yours most respectfully,

BEN DAVID.

NOTE.—As BEN DAVID proposes to prove his proposition in another letter, it may appear to some premature to throw in a note upon this; but if it tends only to shorten the correspondence, by a speedier reaching the end sought, it will be useful. Ben David is a most respectable correspondent, and I ask the readers of "The Republican" to receive his statements as from such a source; but I fear that the passion for supporting a long established system will lead him into unpleasant difficulties and ill-founded conclusions. It is clear, that his purpose is to compare the descriptions of the early Christians with Philo's description of the Esseans and Therapeutæ. But should that comparison be most successful, there is another point to be gained for the divine origin of Christianity, and that is, to shew that there is no mention of such a sect as the Esseans or Therapeutæ before the time given for the appearance of Jesus Christ in Judea; that, indeed, there were no Platonists or Pythagoreans, no Indian sects of the same kind, no morality equal to that of the New Testament. On this latter point, or that there was nothing new in the moral precepts of the New Testament, the readers of "The Republican" and "The Moralist" are well informed. The prior existence of similar sects will become a matter of historical research and historical statement: and if we, on the Anti-christian side, can shew, that sects, as moral and as devout as the Esseans and Therapeutæ, existed two thousand years ago, we overthrow every inference for the validity of the divine origin of Christianity, which Ben David can adduce by any comparison drawn between the Christians and those sects, or by any assumption of novel utility in such associations. Still, I pledge myself to the correct insertion of whatever Ben David sends to me on the subject; and that his statements shall be examined and refuted, if refutable, with that respect which is due to his known liberality toward those who dissent in matters of opinion from him.

R. C.

THE FEAST OF THE GRIDIRON.

(From the Morning Chronicle.)

YESTERDAY a large party of Mr. Cobbett's friends, amounting to between 300 and 400, assembled to dinner at the London Tavern, to celebrate the triumph of Mr. Cobbett's political predictions. The company (judging from their appearance) consisted of respectable Tradesmen and country Farmers. The only gentleman of distinction we could discover was Sir Thomas Beavor. The

only public characters were Mr. Cobbett himself, Mr. Carlile, and Mr. Wells, of Huntingdon.

Mr. Cobbett took the Chair, supported on the right by Sir Thomas Beevor, and on the left by a Mr. Smith, of Liverpool. There were three of Mr. Cobbett's sons present. At the lower end of the room there were large placards exhibited, explanatory of the object of the meeting. The following is a copy:—

“PEEL'S BILL.—This Bill was grounded on concurrent Reports of both Houses; it was passed by unanimous votes of both Houses; it was, at the close of the Session, a subject of high eulogium in the Speaker's speech to the Regent, and in the Regent's speech to the two Houses: now, then, I, William Cobbett, assert, that, to carry this Bill into effect is impossible; and I say, that, if this Bill be carried into full effect, I will give Castlereagh leave to lay me on a GRIDIRON and broil me alive, while Sidmouth may stir the coals, and Canning stand by and laugh at my groans.”—‘Taken from Cobbett's Register, written at North Hempstead, Long Island, on the 24th of September, 1819, and published in England in November, 1819.’

“The Small Note Bill, passed in 1822, partly repealed Peel's Bill, before the day for its going into full effect; and, in December, 1825, the one pound notes of the Bank of England came out again; so that here was the above prophecy completely fulfilled.”

The cloth having been removed, and the dessert served,

Mr. Cobbett ascended the table, amidst the acclamations of the assembly, and said it was impossible for him to proceed to address the Meeting without begging them to accept his best acknowledgement for the flattering manner in which he had been received. The occasion which had called them together was out of the ordinary course. The mode of proceeding must be extraordinary also. In general, proceedings of this kind commenced with the health of him who was to have the honour to address the assembly; but the circumstances which had called them together were peculiar, and he feared he should be compelled to draw more largely upon their patience than he was entitled to do [cheers]. They had met to celebrate an event which had been long talked of—the “Feast of the Gridiron;” and before he sat down, he should endeavour to give a short account of the origin, history, use, and application of that word to politics. But, in the first place, he must congratulate those he saw around him—he must unite with them in expressing their exultations at the triumphs of their principles—the triumph of reason and of truth, and of public spirit, over the most stupid folly, the grossest ignorance and the basest selfishness [loud cheers]. The subject of our triumph is, that we had endeavoured beforehand to guard our country against those evils which have overtaken her—that sacred word Country, so justly dear to all Englishmen at all times but which has of late been perverted to the worst of purposes

[cheers]. In fact, now a days, every man called his own case the cause of his country. Every set of rooks, who issue their own notes—every band of robbers, call themselves the country [a laugh]. They call themselves the country who, in 1819, advocated the infamous Manchester massacre—the Cotton Lords;—the Jews and Jobbers call themselves the country. All those, who have been engaged in the abuse, base beyond description, and those connected with them, call themselves the Country—if you abuse them, you abuse the Country [loud cheers]. Now he would ask the Meeting whether, in point of fact, these rag hook people were any more the country than the real rooks in the pea-field were the farmers [a laugh]? The pole-cat might as well set himself up as the farmer, as these people the country, who have swindled Old England, once so happy, now so miserable, through their agency. The Meeting he saw before him, did not assemble to exult over the distresses of any class of people—on the contrary, they lamented the public suffering—they lamented the fate of the farmer and the industrious tradesman, who had been ruined by the system of paper money. Many had been brought to ruin who were ignorant of the causes, and their fall was deeply regretted. But they were far indeed from expressing any thing like sympathy for that band of robbers who had been the cause of this general destruction. If they were called upon to be extremely compassionate, and not express their exultation at the triumph of their principles, had they not a right to ask what the sons and daughters of corruption did when they thought they had a triumph over the liberties of their country [loud cheers]? What they did at the termination of the war, when they thought they had a triumph, not over the enemies, but the liberties of England [great cheering]? We see the immense debt consequent upon the success of our allies: but you must not exult in the verification of your own predictions, or say you are right; for that would give a triumph to your principles [a laugh]. Now if the evil had been beyond all human controul, and no human means could avert it; or if it were possible to avert the evil by human means, and he pointed out no means to guard against it, then indeed it might be unjust to rejoice; but if the contrary of all this was the case, and if the evil could be prevented by human means, and if these means were pointed out before the evil had approached, and if those who had so pointed them out, had been calumniated, reviled, scorned, and injured, and by all means possible sought to be scouted out of society, because they had predicted the consequences; should they then be so hypocritical as to shed tears of compassion, utter sighs, and be silent [cheers]? He was not a man made in that mould—he hoped the meeting was not [loud cheers]. Their predictions had been fulfilled—their prophecies had been recognized by events. They had done all they could to guard against the consequences, and if calamities had ensued, they had nothing wherewith to reproach

themselves [cheers]. He should now proceed to shew the evils which had accrued from the system—to prove how it had produced poverty; how poverty had produced crime, as they all knew it did, and how it had ultimately entailed more slavery upon England than was endured by any other country in the world. In the first place, he presumed it would not be denied, that what was gained by those in the money trade, must be lost by some one or other. On the note which he had taken to Gurney's Bank at Norwich the other day, amounting to £10, they had cleared £4 13s. 2d. Some one therefore must have lost. But was it not obvious, that it would be better the affairs of the country were carried on in coin made by the King and the Government only, so that a man could not make up a parcel of them, and go and purchase goods when he had no money to offer—a system which had reduced England to a state of misery and wretchedness never experienced by any other country but poor Ireland herself [great cheers]. It was only yesterday they had been told by Sir R. Peel, that it was all a family concern—all the loans and taxes were a mere family concern, owed by ourselves to ourselves [much laughing]; so that when the tax-gatherer comes for his taxes, he does not take them out of the family. This might be all very well for the families who gained any thing by it [applause]. Now, suppose when dinner was laid on this table to-day, that the waiters had carried off all the dishes and wine too, and placed it on that table, leaving us nothing but the nut-shells and crusts of bread, how should we feel if any one told us—"Oh! it's all in the family [a laugh]?" Now, they were told that the people of this country were not so poor as they were formerly; and he might, perhaps, be called on for proofs. His first proof, and one to which he prayed their attention, was, that in the neighbouring County of Berks—where, if there were any mis-statement, it would soon be corrected. In the year 1790, a certain allowance of food was fixed on by the Magistrates for men who were unable to procure employment; and the meeting would be astonished, when he stated that the allowance was only one half at the present day [hear!]. Berkshire was accounted a most humane county; the Magistrates, speaking generally, were more gentle than elsewhere. Yet such was the condition of that humane county. And he was persuaded there was not a man who heard him, whatever might be his political feeling, and although his belly might be full and his back well covered, who did not feel that the honour and glory of his county, the happiness of himself and children, depended on the fate of the labouring population [cheers]. The next instance to which he would call the attention of the House was the declaration of the four judges of the Court of Kings' Bench. Last year a complaint was made against the Magistrates of Northallerton, in Yorkshire, for having confined to bread and water a prisoner on mere suspicion of guilt. It was argued, that had the man been convicted, and sentenced to the tread-mill, he would have received a better allowance. But the Judges answered, and with great truth, or at least they put a question which amounted to a declaration, that bread and water was the com-

mon food of the labourers of England. The men were as well fed as the common run, and they therefore refused to grant the application [hear]. So that we have the four Judges of the King's Bench—full of honesty, as he believed; but full of truth, when they declared that the food of the common labourers of England was bread and water [cheers]. In 1821, a Committee of the House of Commons sat to consider the state of agriculture. He did not believe the House meant to inquire into much beyond the payment of rents; and how the rents were to be got whilst prices remained low [hear, hear]? But, in the course of these inquiries, some strange things came out. He found, amongst other witnesses, a Mr. Hanning was examined. That Gentleman was asked this question:—"Has there been any change in the food of the labourers within the last two years?" To which he answered—"Unquestionably; I see the labourers—being constantly moving about my own farms—I see them now almost wholly supplied with potatoes; breakfast and dinner brought to them in the fields, and nothing but potatoes" [hear, hear, hear!]. "Were they in the habit in better times of consuming a certain quantity of animal food? Some certain portion, for instance, bacon and cheese, which they do not use now [hear!]. Here then, was a fact of which there could be no doubt; it was stated by one of themselves; and he really could not understand how English Gentlemen could endure that their labourers should have nothing but potatoes for breakfast and dinner, and derive a profit from such means. This statement would explain why it was we now saw the labourers of England such skeletons as they are, and covered in such rags, and in a degree of misery unexampled in any part of the world—the poor Irish alone excepted [loud cheers]. Now we have seen what the food of the English labourer is, let us next examine his drink.—On this point, Mr. John Ellman was examined, and was asked these questions—"When you first began business, were your labourers in the daily habit of drinking beer?—Yes, all of them. Has that practice ceased altogether, or does it exist now in part?—It has ceased generally where the masters do not find them in beer. When I first began farming in the parish where I now reside, we had not a family in the parish that did not brew their own beer, and enjoy it by their own fire-side. There are few of them that do so now, unless I give them malt [hear, hear!]."—How often Mr. Ellman might give his labourers malt, he was unable to say; but he would ask, was it possible to see those things without considering the causes from which they had sprung? England had always been famed for her industry, her public spirit, her valour, &c., but for nothing so much as her good living. In a preamble to a Bill, so far back as Henry the Eighth, for regulating the price of meat, there were these remarkable words—"Pork, Beef, Mutton, and Veal being the food of the poorer sort of people [cheers]." Ten thousand witnesses could not prove the fact more strongly than this preamble, that the country had degenerated; for now there was not one man out of fifty that tasted meat in ten days [cheers]. A clergyman in Suffolk, in describing the state of the labourers, said, that such was their condition, their wages would provide them nothing but food, there being then no means to provide fuel or clothes; and then the Reverend Gent. went on to describe the growing immorality of the county [a laugh]. It was clear that poverty was the source of the crime, not crime the source of the poverty. How was it that they never heard of Lords or Members of Parliament committing petty larcency [much

laughing]? Their principles of religion were the same—they had the same Churches, the same Meeting Houses, the same Testament, the same Teachers, as the lower classes; but, some way or other, you never hear of their committing petty larceny [greater laughter]. The other day when the Magistrates in Yorkshire sentenced a man to transportation to Botany Bay, was he ashamed of his offence? No such thing; he said to them, “So much the better—you may all go to hell” [great laughter]. Nor was there any thing unreasonable in this; for it was better to be in prison than have the parish allowance; and preferable to be transported than to be in prison [hear, hear!]. In the year 1821 or 1822, Mr. Curwen presented a Petition from several persons of whom he was the representative, praying that the Honourable House would be graciously pleased to have them transported for life; and when such a request was made, could it be expected we should have any thing but crime? But he would ask, why was it that out of the six hundred and fifty-eight Commoners, and five hundred Peers, no one legislator had come forward to remedy these abuses? But this was not all—our legislators had even gone back to the re-enactment of Penal Laws. In the times of our forefathers, the going on a man’s field was punishable by action of damages; but now the thing is different.—At last they pushed their system of aggravated punishment to extremity, and made it felony to rob in gardens and orchards. This was monstrous. When he was a boy, both he and others had been in the habit of robbing orchards as many times as there were bones in the hands and fingers. But now, in this great age of morality and improvement, it was made felony for boys to rob a garden or orchard, which, when he was a boy almost all boys in the country were accustomed to do, without imagining that they were committing anything like an offence which deserved the punishment of felony. Look at the system as it stood then, compared with what it was now! For going and taking apples or other fruit out of an orchard, the punishment formerly was paying, as damages, the value of the fruit, compensation for the injury done to the grass, the hedges, or walls, &c. This was all, except in certain cases, where money was not to be had; and then a boy was handed to a constable to suffer such a whipping as he would have received from his father. That was the law not above 20 years ago. But since the progressive rise of the paper system—since our great commercial prosperity—since the establishment of our Sunday Schools—since the vast improvements that had taken place—it became necessary to hold a tighter hand over the people, and to increase the severity of the law (laughter.) Sir J. Mackintosh, who had presented so many Petitions against the severity of the criminal code, and who had made speeches for its mitigation as long as the room in which they were assembled (a laugh), for the purpose of amend-

ing the morals and promoting the improvements of the age, had at last succeeded in one object. He had procured a law to be passed, by which it became no longer legal to burn witches (a laugh); so that witches were now perfectly safe from being burned; but boys must take care how they entered a garden or orchard (a laugh.) But while Sir James was thus hard at work for the witches, others were as hard at work in their way of drawing the cords of the law tighter and tighter, especially with respect to gardens and orchards, to enter and rob which, whether fenced or unfenced, was made felony! And what was felony? A man guilty of felony might be hanged or might be transported, and so forth; and the consequences were, that from the moment of conviction, the convict forfeited all his goods and chattels to the King—that he forfeited all his freehold lands and tenements during his life, and that his children forfeited them for a year and a day after his death, the Crown having till then the power of committing waste; and this was the punishment which our mild and boasted law provided for a boy who broke into an orchard [a laugh and cheers]. He did not quarrel with the law, if Government were compelled to support this system of paper money.—Where such a system was suffered to exist, they must have such laws to preserve even their gardens and orchards!—Nevertheless, the severity of the law was not found sufficient for the purpose of checking crime; and it was necessary to resort to their augmentations of the number and size of gaols, to their penitentiaries, to their solitary cells, their hulks, and all the grand improvements of the age [a laugh, and cheers] to provide accommodation for the mass of criminals! A new scheme was now in hand—the Bill of Mr. Peel, the great Minister of the Interior [laughter]—that celebrated Financier, who was to substitute gold for paper [laughter]. Mr. Peel had brought forward a new Bill for the improvement of the criminal law, and that law contained a provision for granting rewards to all persons, calculated to operate particularly upon persons in distressed circumstances, who were naturally most apt to be unprincipled, for informing against and apprehending criminals. Nothing could be more abhorrent to the spirit of the old law of England than such a law as this. Even in the few cases in which it had been before enacted, such as house breaking and highway robbery, it had been always suspected to be very dangerous by most eminent constitutional men, to give rewards for assisting in apprehending offenders. And, indeed, what could be more dangerous, than inducing unprincipled men, by rewards, to become the accusers of others? But here rewards were to be given to such persons, at the discretion of the Court, in any case of felony or misdemeanour; and in case of the death of any man entitled to such reward, it was to go to his wife and children; and in case he had none, then to his father or mother. What was the situation of the country when any man might get a reward for accusing another! The intention was to make people interested in the

detection and punishment of crimes, so as to leave them more room in their gaols. But Mr. Peel never thought of going to the roots and causes of the evil, and could find nothing better than this plan of rewarding some for apprehending others! How came it that they wanted these gaols and penitentiaries, and rewards? At one time such a thing as rewarding for apprehensions was held highly dangerous, and was never thought of before the establishment of the Bank of England in 1695. That year produced the first instance of a law to reward a man for apprehending his neighbour. He did not mean to blame the Ministers. If he himself were Minister, and were bound to carry on the systems of taxation and paper money, he would say, "Let me have laws of the greatest severity—laws making it felony for boys to rob orchards" [laughter and cheers.] Ministers must have such laws, if they must carry on the taxation and paper system. They were called innovators, revolutionists, and so forth, when they really wanted nothing more than the old constitution.

He concluded by thanking them for the manner in which he had been received. As they had met to congratulate him, so he begged leave to congratulate them; and trusted they never would have cause to blush for the friendship and countenance which they had shewn him on that evening [loud and continued cheering].—Mr. Cobbett then proposed a toast—"The King and may he once more exercise his exclusive prerogative of making money" [applause]. He then proposed for the next toast—"The industrious and laborious people of this country, and may their food and raiment cease to be taken from them by the jugglers of paper money" [drunk with great applause].

NOTE.—I have not room to copy the whole of the report from "The Morning Chronicle;" but the best speaker in the room was Mr Samuel Wells, of Huntingdon, who thought his own political history and his knowledge, by records, that he had had a great great-grandfather (a Wells) the most important subject wherewith to entertain the meeting.

The expectation of seeing a large Gridiron displayed was disappointed. The feast of the Gridiron was not embellished with any other gridiron than a small one on the card of admission, which, I presume, is, in future, to be the family armorial bearing of the Cobbetts.

The dinner and wines were both bad, and bore no comparison with those served up at the City of London Tavern on the 30th of January last. I did not attend to partake of the festivity of this Assembly; for I saw no ground for joy connected with the subject: I attended as a reporter, or rather as an observer and listener. I heard some gentlemen about me expressing their surprise, that the name of Thomas Paine was not mentioned; and one in particular observed, that Mr. Paine was the original of all that Mr. Cobbett had said upon the subject of paper money, and that nothing really good would be done in the country until his name became the leading toast.

Mr. Cobbett talked his usual nonsense upon the subject of free trade, which, an otherwise warm admirer of his at my elbow observed, that he evidently did not understand. His speech was too long by an hour and a half, and painfully tedious to the readers of the Register; for it was, in fact, a mere reading of extracts from the Register. Mr. Thomas Smith, of Liverpool, fell into the same error as to free trade, and, from unnecessarily introducing the subject in a tedious and confused manner, talked where silence would have displayed the greater wisdom. Sir Thomas Beevor shewed the Meeting, that title was not synonymous with talent, and gave us a clue to the stimulants which had induced him to seek to send Mr. Cobbett to the House of Commons by pecuniary subscription.

R. C.

STEWART'S LECTURES.

LECTURE V.

The subject of my next Lecture will be the discipline of judgment, to attemper its powers with the indispensable quality of doubt, to resemble the magnetic needle in its approximation to the polarity, not point of certitude.

Also, to discipline the faculty of belief as serviceable only to poetical action, but incompatible with all theory and systems of knowledge.

ON THE FACULTIES OF JUDGMENT AND BELIEF.

THE faculty of judgment was called by ancient philosophers the door of wisdom, in its suspensive operations of doubt, and might, I think, with still more propriety, be called the temple instead of the door of wisdom. All the venial errors of human reason (not its follies and superstitions) have arisen from the defective knowledge of the nature of the faculty of judgment, which I now propose to explain to you in its phenomena or operations upon my own mind.

I must preface this Discourse with an enquiry into the nature of moral truth, (as contrasted with physical truth) the great object of the doubtful and difficult operations of judgment. The character of moral truth has been kept sacred by prejudice from the least quality of doubt; and moral axioms have been ever treated with the precision of mathematical principles.

If we throw aside the veil of prejudice, we shall discover that moral truth is nothing but the result or balance of greater or lesser evidence, as distinguished from physical truth, founded on demonstration, which shews a contrary conclusion to be contradictory or false. For example, in the most fixed and absolute proposition of moral truth, viz. that murder is an evil, the European inhabitant applies this moral axiom to a certain conditionality or doubtfulness in the three cases of foreign, domestic, and personal enemies. The sect of Quakers diminish this conditionality or doubtfulness to the total abstinence of all slaughter of the human species. The Bramin, in Asia, reduces this conditionality or doubtfulness one degree more than the Quaker, and construes the moral axiom of murder to comprehend the destruction of any animal life. A new sect of improved Pythagoreans, who maintain the transmutation of the same indestructible matter from one body to another, both in life and death, and not the mystic unintelligible transmigration of spirit, construe this axiom into the abstinence of all violence, as well as all destruction of animal life. This last sentiment reduces the moral axiom or certitude to its minimum of doubtfulness, but still this diminished degree is by no means an absolute point of certitude.

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Ask this omoousiast, or improved Pythagorean, who maintains the unity of all nature in interest, power, and essence, in time and futurity, what he thinks of violence and destruction to noxious animals, as locusts, serpents, and beasts of prey. His answer will terminate in no absolute point, but waver in doubtfulness and conditionality. These observations, notwithstanding they are irrefutable, have no tendency however to discourage the moral philosopher, but, on the contrary, excite efforts of appreciating and multiplying moral evidence, whose balance, of more or less, in the approximation of moral truth, or human happiness, is of more inestimable interest than all the certitude of physical science. I shall elucidate this important truth by taking a retrospective view of all the advantages of physical certitude in its ample discoveries.

The mathematical discoveries of Archimedes or Pythagoras have enabled civilized nations to circumnavigate the globe, and disperse among the uncorrupted children of nature their passions, vices, wants, diseases, and mental imbecility. The discovery of the printing-press, so highly appreciated, has brought upon the human species a dazzling light of observation without any contemplation to direct it, who, like unfledged birds, forced from the nest by their own precipitate action, every succeeding motion accelerates their dissolution. This simile is clearly verified by the late revolution on the continent of Europe, where the people were excited by periodical publication to precipitate themselves into action without the least capacity to think or to reason.

These illustrations are not intended to depreciate the discoveries and communications of science, but only to shew the immense superiority of moral evidence over physical demonstration in its influence on human happiness. I will venture to declare, without any fear of censure, that the least important discoveries of moral evidence in these Lectures will have more influence on human happiness than all the discoveries of physical science throughout the annals of human history.

Sir Isaac Newton has discovered, on demonstrative evidence, the primary law of motion, viz. that bodies fall in the compound ratio of their density and distance. I have discovered, on moral evidence, the primary law of intellectual power, viz. that human intellect, in its sixth sense of thought, can have no action in an unintelligible medium, no more than the sense of sight in an invisible medium, or that of touch in an untangible medium.

Sir Isaac Newton has discovered the laws of light and colours in the precise demonstration of the prism. I have discovered the means of augmenting and disciplining the powers of intellect by a certain art of thinking according to stated rules. The physical demonstration of Sir Isaac Newton is qualified with the consummate precision of mathematical knowledge, while my moral evidence carries in it some degree of doubtfulness and indecision.

This incertitude of moral evidence is, however, sufficient to

effect all the purposes of use and instruction, and being employed to produce wisdom and sagacity instead of science, it exceeds the value of demonstration as much as the laws of intellect exceed in human interest and human happiness the laws of light and colours.

The doubtfulness of moral evidence and moral truth will appear a disgusting sentiment to the fixed and prejudiced disposition of unenquiring minds; but I think I can produce a satisfactory elucidation to remove all pious disquietude on that subject.

If we attend to nautical science, we shall discover a very close analogy between the marine longitude and moral truth or evidence. The constant motion of the sea renders all the observation of instruments on celestial objects doubtful and inaccurate in their locality and distances, by which means the marine longitude becomes doubtful and inaccurate in its adjustment. Just so it is with the adjustment of moral truth and evidence, the perpetual fluctuation of human opinion and human action, from the vicissitude of circumstances, resembles the motion of the sea, and affects the reasoning faculties, or instruments of moral observation, with the same doubtfulness and incertitude as to the adjustment of truth. Notwithstanding this incertitude, navigators continue to diminish it by improving their instruments, and by the assistance of its inaccurate evidence, extend with confidence their voyages to every part of the globe. Such also is the conduct of the true moral philosopher, he labours to improve and rectify the instruments of the understanding, and by the assistance of moral evidence, however defective in precision, he bears his doubts with all the cheerful confidence of the mariner, and pursues the course of self and universal good, in time and futurity, upon a competent, not precise, scale of approximative truth or good.

Having explained the nature of moral evidence, as opposed to mathematical demonstration, I shall resume my specific subject—the explanation of the faculty of judgment in its operation on that evidence. I shall pursue the instructive and apt simile of nautical science, and treat the operations of judgment as most indeviably accordant with the needle of the mariner's compass. I shall, according to my proposed and constant method, describe the operations of the faculty of judgment in my own mind, which I have no doubt will be a just model of all intellectual action when the mental sensibility of mankind shall enable thought to invert its powers, and make the mind an object of its own contemplation. When my mind is put in action by the faculty of judgment, I feel the operations of thought oscillating backward and forward under the opposing arguments of moral evidence, just as the needle of the compass vibrates under the influence of magnetic variations.

I prepare the temperament or habitude of my mind previous to the operation of judgment, as the mariner prepares his compass. He first examines the traverse of all its parts, that all fixture may be avoided, and the oscillation preserved throughout the whole

mechanism. He next removes all great objects of magnetic influence, lest the needle of the compass should feel any undue impulse. In the same manner I detach the traverse of reason from all the fixed propensities of the will, that the essential character of judgment, doubt, may be preserved in oscillation like the magnetic needle. I next take a suspicious and vigilant view of all the impulses of education, example, custom, and habit, and remove them, as far as possible, from the sphere of influence on the intellectual compass.

The most momentous object of influence, and the most difficult to be resisted, is the intellectual habitude of reasoning, which forms the action of thought into a tune, whose key-note generates all the rest in consecutive harmony. This imperious habitude, which, like iron in the vicinity of the compass, deranges the action of the needle of judgment, is most evident in the most extravagant errors of metaphysics. Metaphysical Doctors, arguing either with themselves in meditation or in conversation with each other, mistake the impulse of habit for the sensation of object, and, like children, talk of ghosts and spirits till the motion of fancy becomes more powerful than the convictions of reason, and no eloquence whatever could convince these men of letters that the word spirit conveyed no possible idea.

The politician, conversing with himself and colleagues, perpetually singing the same arguments, nothing can variegate the tune of his tenets, though the Bastile of the despot, or the ostracism of the rabble, threaten him every moment with the scaffold, as exemplified in the histories of Greece and Rome. Such imperious habitudes of thought and opinion I guard against by reading controversial authors, conversing with men of contrary sentiments, and by the severest self-controversy. By such means I prepare the oscillation of the needle of judgment to vibrate with all the counter impulses of universal moral evidence, procured by the faculty of contemplation presenting to the mind every possible view, combination, and relation of things.

It may be objected to this mode of operation of the faculty of judgment, that it causes too much anxiety, ignorance, and irresolution, and deprives the mind of all decision.

To this I reply, that the phenomena or actions of judgment follow the closest analogy with the mariner's compass—the vessel it guides does not stop one moment, but turns its prow to the index of the card, where the magnetic needle points. Just so the moralist moves forward in deliberative calculation of necessary action, which conforms with the index of circumstances, without arresting the vibration of the needle of judgment, and the mind acquires the cheerful confidence and constant decision of the mariner, though doubt is inseparable from both operations of moral and physical truth. The highest degree of mental sensibility, or intellectual action, is necessary (I will not say to direct the nee-

dle of judgment in its punctuation) but simply to give it vibration in doubt.

How few minds are capable or willing to open the door of wisdom called doubt. Legislators, both ancient and modern, have been obliged to temporize with this popular propensity, and to issue their laws and maxims in the name of oracles, which drove a nail into the mental compass, and arresting thereby the vibrations of judgment, individuals were preserved in a state of national harmony, while those great political bodies of nations were forced into the eccentric orbits of opinion, hatred and warfare.

This mode of reasoning by authority, instead of argument, has generated a universal repugnance to doubt. The Deist will read no books, and converse with no Doctors of Revelation, and *vice versâ*. The democrat will read no books, and converse with no partizans of aristocracy, and *vice versâ*. And these examples exhibit the whole cause of error in the operations of the faculty of judgment. Having explained sufficiently the nature of this faculty in its double phenomena of rectitude and error, as exhibited in the operations of my own mind, I shall proceed to consider in my proposed order the modes and means of augmenting its powers.

The import of the word judgment suggests to us all the means of its improvement; it imports decision, discrimination, or balance of arguments: now it is most demonstrable, that this balance of moral evidence, like that of arithmetic, cannot be struck without comprehending all the items that are to produce it. Who ever heard of the balance of an account current without comprehending all the items of both debit and credit? where if a single item is neglected on either side, the sum of the balance must be false. This analogy teaches that the faculty of judgment increases its powers by multiplying the matter of evidence. The barriers of authority must be trampled on, custom, education, prejudice, and mental habitudes, must be suspected and examined with the severest scrutiny; controversial writings and conversations must be sought after; and when a constant habitude of reasoning shall enable us to resist and suspect the influence of the will and affections, in this state to hold a controversial soliloquy becomes the true criterion of the temper of judgment, and carries its powers to their maximum of energy.

I now come to the last division of my topic, which is, according to the method of my Discourse, a rule of discipline to guide the improved powers of the faculty of judgment in their operations. The rule of discipline for the conduct of judgment is never to suspend the action of doubt even in the most peremptory decision. I shall exemplify this rule with a few clear and irrefutable examples. I will first exhibit a case of doubt in personal conduct to constitute virtue, or the art of happiness.

I will suppose that I am summoned before the Inquisition to

recant, with a verbal negative, philosophical truths that I have published in the most voluminous demonstrations. The great moral axiom of sincerity or truth, the north star of virtue, affects the oscillating needle of judgment, while doubt accommodates action to existing circumstances, and strikes the balance of verbal recantation as an indirect mean to obtain the end, sincerity. The conduct of Galileo, who obtained his enlargement from prison by the above mean of recantation, will explain the utility of doubt. He used his liberty to pursue and publish his demonstrations of the motion of the earth, which he could not have accomplished without his liberty.

The citizen, or moralist, must have the needle of judgment arrested in its punctuation of existing laws, customs, and institutions, while doubt vibrates its motions towards the perfectibility of a state of nature, through the progress of intellectual power, which converges the two objects, truth and doubt, to their maximum and minimum, without ever meeting the point of coalescence. This sentiment may be elucidated by considering the civil institution of matrimony, in which a great evil exists by subjecting the will of one human being to that of another.

The faculty of judgment must punctuate this expedient, evil, while doubt may oscillate its needle towards easier laws of divorce, or a speculative state of nature.

This same temperament of rational doubt has been censured with the appellation of inconsistency, want of principle, irresolution, and folly. I think I can easily confute this censure, and turn it all upon the adversary by a few simple observations.

The man of wisdom, or virtue, holds all his principles immutable in their ends, but mutable in their means; his judgment punctuates the inestimable good of liberty, but doubt oscillates the intellectual needle through all those restraints of checks and balances of power that may prevent the people in a democracy from assuming the executive authority into their own hands, the perpetual cause of anarchy and despotism.

The man whose mind is disciplined with doubt, can temporize with means, even though contrasted with their ends, as when the Habeas Corpus, the great bulwark of civil liberty, is suspended in times of insurrection; while men who have no discipline of doubt in the faculty of judgment, mistake the means for the end, and, like the hypochondriac, wear the same cloaths through the whole year, from an incapacity to accommodate the means to the end, as the dress to the seasons.

Doubt will probably be objected to as the cause of despondency; I think I can easily prove that rational doubt is the only cure of despair, and the preventative of almost all kinds of insanity. How many instances of despair and madness have we witnessed in history in the dogmatism of learned men. John Jacques Rousseau lingered through a consumption of jealousy, brought on

by the arguments of opponents; and Dr. Johnson, the giant of literature and dogma, was killed by the sting of irony in the hand of Lexicophanes. How many bigots have gone mad in an attempt to remove the same oscillation of doubt in judgment from the dogma of sectarian creeds. He who would drive doubt from the mind in the operations of judgment, would resemble the mariner who should sail straight forward to the light-house of a harbour, and neglect the rocks, shoals, and soundings of the coast.

Doubt, as the rule of discipline for the exercise of the faculty of judgment, makes wisdom the criterion of thought, and virtue the criterion of action, by rendering their principles immutable, and their means subservient and accommodative to existing circumstances, thus exhibiting a double scale of truth in theory and practice, and making virtue the art of calculating present and future interest, instead of an unintelligible doctrine of vain suffering and privation, which disgusts the attention, corrupts the powers of reason, and leads to intolerance, discord, and anarchy.

If we unfold the awful record of the French Revolution, we shall discover that all its horrors and failures originated from the defect of doubt in the faculty of judgment. In comparing the views of the different factions, we see them all in the most perfect concord of ends, Republican liberty; and those leaders of democracy, Robespierre, Danton, Hebert, and Tallien, must have differed but little in their means, though this trivial dissonance excited the fanaticism of opinion, which made them destroy each other.

Among the scientific class of human population upon the continent of Europe, I never met with a mind that could bear the same vibratory motion of judgment in the habitude of doubt, and I easily discovered the cause to originate from the pursuit of physical and the neglect of moral science. The physical sciences being unconditional in all their propositions, eradicate all propensities of doubt from the intellectual temperament—while the moral science, banished to free countries by its conditional and doubtful propositions, generates the characteristic temperament of thoughtfulness or doubt, which distinguishes the civic people of Great Britain and America from all the inhabitants of the globe.

ON THE FACULTY OF BELIEF.

I have proposed to myself in the conduct of these Lectures a perpetual silence on the subject of religion, for this simple reason, that my research is after the intelligible laws of knowledge, and not the unintelligible actions of the mind, influenced by religious faith, which is said by the Priesthood to be a supernatural gift or revelation, and an unintelligible mystery. Religious faith, as far as reason and knowledge can comprehend its action, is a mere

affection of the moral temperament, excited by their operation of fancy, agitated by hopes and fears to admit the dictates of authority, however absurd, without any examination. Belief is a positive faculty of intelligence, applicable solely to testimony to direct human action, while evidence alone can direct reason in knowledge or science.

It will be of great advantage for the understanding of the word belief, and correcting its application, to observe the serious discrimination between the two words, testimony and evidence. The word testimony, as its etymology signifies, means the oral declaration of a human being, or witness, of things past, and exhibited to his intelligence or senses by evidence, or by the testimony of others. The word evidence means the exhibition of things in their various relations and appearances of things, past or present, to the six senses, from which are formed conjectures and opinions of their concealed relations or conclusions. To testimony the word belief is properly applied, because we have no means of acquiring evidence, or exhibition of attested facts, as related by a witness. Evidence is derived from the Latin word, *videre*, to see, or to be present to our senses, as when I see a man lying dead on the floor, with a pistol discharged by his side, I then say, or ought to say, that I think, conjecture, or conclude, that the pistol was the cause of his death. It would be improper to apply the word belief, in this case, because I see the evidential facts, and have no occasion to accord credit, confidence, or trust, to the oral narration of a witness. The concealed fact, the cause of death, I think, conjecture, or conclude, to be suicide, from analogical relations, predicated upon evidential facts, to which the word belief is totally inapplicable, unmeaning, and incongruous, notwithstanding the universal practice of mankind.

Testimony, or the faculty of belief, can have no relation whatever to knowledge, science, or any operation of intellectual power; their influence is restricted to human action alone, as may be thus exemplified. If I am told by a traveller that he saw robbers in a forest, I may believe his testimony, and regulate my journey accordingly; but if he tells me that he heard Peter say, that robbery was a vice, or a virtue, I cannot operate upon this declaration or testimony by the faculty of belief, but I must appeal it to reason, in order to examine the evidence of the relations of human sensations and civil laws, to govern them by the criterion of public good, from which we draw the conclusion that robbery is a vice, or a virtue.

When Mahomet descended from the seventh heaven upon a white horse, and told his followers that he had there heard it was a virtue to massacre infidels to this testimony of a celestial voyage, and a celestial conference, the faculty of belief might accord credence if intelligible, but the proposition of massacre had nothing to do with belief, because it was a subject of the science

of ethics to be appealed to evidence, and to be reasoned in the relations of universal good.

I recommend it to contemplative minds to estimate the important and beneficent consequence of the discrimination between testimony and evidence, the one being oral declaration (that no experience can reach) claiming faith or belief, an indispensable guide to human *action* only.

Evidence imports the phenomena of things exhibited to the senses, and amenable to experience, the indispensable guide to *doctrines* or *knowledge*, which can have no relation to testimony, faith, or belief.

Schools diffuse science through the medium of evidence, and have no concern with testimony. Courts of Justice act through the medium of testimony, but have nothing to do with evidence.

If the proper and clear discrimination between the words testimony and evidence had been known, or attended to by past ages, the frauds of superstition in false revelations would not have rendered the human species the buffoons of the animal kind.

The great characteristic of human nature, perfectibility, renders the moral science so perpetually mutable, that no dictate of authority given at one period can offer any criterion for human conduct at a future period, which, like theameleon's colours, changes with the change of surrounding objects; so right and wrong, in moral rectitude, must be measured by existing circumstances of practical condition, and perfectible theory, upon the criterion of public good, established on the evidence of things, and not testimony of persons.

It was announced, four thousand years ago, to be the personified will of nature, that we should eat no pork, and mutilate the most delicate members of the body. It is now said that this volition is changed, and that we may eat the one, and abstain from the other. Who knows, but in the progress of improving reason, justice itself (or what is now esteemed such) may become a crime, when a community of property may be found more productive of happiness than personal appropriation. This reflection shews that the fitness of things, and not volition, can be the only standard of truth.

These previous reflections will suffice, I hope, to check all jealous allusions in weak and prejudiced minds between rational belief and religious faith, and reconcile the most impartial attention to the temperate discussion of these lectures. I shall proceed, therefore, with the confidence of Galileo and Sir Isaac Newton, to develop the laws of intellect and nature, though all the authorities of books and sages imposed a previous negative to my enquiries.

In my travels throughout the various classes of human population, I witnessed the most enormous crimes to proceed from the

undisciplined exercise of the faculty of belief surrendering the dictates of reason to the sanction of authority.

Among various nations of India I observed parents devote themselves to death ; leaving behind them a large family of destitute and miserable orphans, in a belief of receiving behind the blue mountains personal rewards for such impious actions. I observed whole nations wage wars of extirpation upon opposite creeds, respecting the access of the posthumous mountains ; one maintaining the entrance to be on the north, and the other insisting upon the same authority of tradition preserved and interpreted by the priesthood, that it lay to the south. The contemplation of such scenes of human depravity and imbecility excited in my mind the following reflections :—

Supposing the necessary consequence of intoxication to be the infallible commission of the most enormous crimes, would it not be necessary, for the immediate safety of society, that the highest penalty of the law should attach itself to inebriety.

Witnessing the horrid examples of injury and cruelty that man was seduced to commit upon his own person (what then would he not commit upon others). This thought suggested itself to my mind, that the surrender of reason to authority was the highest crime human nature could be guilty of, because it implied the commission of every atrocity, and the adoption of every folly.

The intellectual laws of nature have placed in the mind of every man an infallible criterion of sensation, of pain, and pleasure, that is, good and evil, which are increased by their communication to others, and whatever authority opposes itself to this criterion, must be the same imposture of artifice as would recommend a bandage to the eyes to impair the sight, or iron gloves to the fingers to improve the touch.

The individual who should surrender this indispensable criterion of natural light, however feeble its power to the frauds of fanciful opinion, gives up all the faculties of manhood, and enters into a voluntary state of outlawry with nature. It will, possibly, be objected to the existence of this criterion of conscience, governed by the experience of sensation, that the volume of human history, through all times and ages, gives perpetual testimony in extravagant opinions, and atrocious actions of mankind, that this criterion of conscience has been perpetually perverted by education, custom, example, and habit ; and, in such a predicament, could never become the standard of human opinion, or human action.

In my previous discourse, I have proved to demonstration, that the distinguishing quality of man from the brute species, is perfectibility, or a capacity of advancing his moral powers, and consequently improving his state of being, or condition of life, which all other animals are totally deprived of.

This human characteristic, perfectibility, resides entirely in the improving powers of intellect, and these lectures constitute the first essay that ever was made to discover and establish a discipline of thought, or criterion of sensation, as the standard of human reason, or progressive scale of human perfectibility.

The laws of intellect guard the six senses with a most vigilant and restrictive barrier called experience from the dangerous influence of the faculty of belief. To this faculty nature has prescribed a very narrow boundary of desultory opinion, and desultory action, in the case of evidence, which demands implicit and unmeasured assent. For example: I am told, that a pestilence has broke out in a certain city, and I put off my destined journey with the faculty of belief. Again, I am told, by a traveller, that robbers have been seen upon the road, upon which the faculty of belief impels me, without much reasoning, to change my route. In all such occasional and contingent conduct the faculty of belief has almost an arbitrary and uncontrolled power, but in the systematic and permanent conduct of life it is imperiously and indispensibly governed by knowledge and experience, to make conscience an approximate standard of rectitude.

In all sciences, whether physical or moral, belief is incompatible with their nature. No man says he believes in astronomy, in chemistry, mathematics, or ethics, he says he knows them, and acquires such knowledge through demonstration and evidence, and not belief. It is, indeed, advantageous, to procure the mental temperament of sagacity and wisdom, that we should not approach the demonstration of the physical sciences, but receive them all with the faculty belief, upon the testimony of their authors, when we know that such demonstrations do exist, and that we can approach them at our pleasure if any doubts of their rectitude should arise.

We must, however, take special notice, that when our ideas or notions are founded on mere testimony, they are but actions of thought, and cannot be called real ideas till we approach the demonstration, though they serve all the purpose of real knowledge. For example: I am assured, by Sir Isaac Newton, that the sun is fixed in the centre of the solar system; and that if I choose he will demonstrate its certitude. If I decline attention to the demonstration, lest it should burthen my memory with useless matter, and receive it as mere testimony with my faculty of belief, it stands in my mind as a mere action of thought, though a real conformity with the relation of things, and therefore a good idea, though I have no assurance thereof. Again: if a geographer presents to me a map of the world, where the cities of Pekin and Constantinople are marked, I meet that testimony with belief, and hold those objects in my mind, because, if I doubt, I can appeal to the experience of my own senses by going to see them.

By these examples we discover that the laws of intellectual power have guarded the sixth sense of thought with the same shield of experience common to the other five senses. For example: if the sense of sight believes it sees a stick (which is really straight) crooked in the water, the sense of touch will undeceive it with experience, and *vice versâ*. If the touch is deceived by external objects, through the disordered medium of the palsy, the sense of sight will detect its error by experience.

In the same manner the sixth sense of thought, in its organ, the brain, is indeviably guided by experience, beyond which it cannot advance even by the faculty of belief, for, if it could, all standard of reason and conscience would be lost, and man would become not the highest energy of the mundane system, but the lowest buffoon of all animated beings.

It may be objected to this theory of experience controlling belief, that the records of history are placed beyond its reach, and that we can meet only this vast volume of instruction by implicit assent and unreasoned belief. What does the instruction of history amount to? As far as it regards the arts and sciences, their rules and demonstration accompany them at all periods, and become the knowledge, not the belief of the present age.

We are told, that such a beast as Alexander the Great, so called¹ by fools and poets, lived and desolated the earth with his vice, ignorance, and ambition; and, if we believe, or disbelieve it, what is lost or gained to human intelligence?

It may be observed, that the histories of Greece and Rome carry in them important instruction respecting the science of civil government, and the great mass of experience upon which it is formed. I have already observed, that all useful knowledge must depend on actual experience, and whoever should attempt to make the History of Greece the model of modern policy, would commit the same error as some females, who mistake the characters of a romance for the criterion of domestic life.

The people of Greece were treacherous, thoughtless, garrulous, from the employment of memory, and lived in a tumultuous and anarchical state of pure democracy. The modern people of civic life are sincere, thoughtful, taciturn in reflection, and employing the inventive memory of sagacity, rather than the retentive memory of learning, living in a state of delegated, not pure democracy.

There is, therefore, no correspondency of character or circumstance, and consequently no model for experience can be drawn from history: it must be read as a wide field of mental exercitation only where belief or disbelief is a matter of total indifference, since all instruction depends on actual experience, and we have a modern lesson of more certitude relative to the consequence of popular ignorance, from the tumultuous elections of large towns, than could be found in all the volumes of ancient history.

The last, and most important function of the faculty of belief, is exercised in social intercourse in giving credit to the promises and assertions of our fellow-citizens. This function, however, is still restricted by the safe criterion of experience, which measures its credit to the scale of probation, and, when fraud is once detected, belief ceases.

I have exhibited enough of the various actions of the faculty of belief, in my own mind, to give the knowledge of its nature. I shall next consider by what means its powers may be improved; and lastly, what is their rule of discipline.

In order to improve the actions of this faculty of belief, we must constantly remember two irrefutable axioms. The first, that belief cannot operate upon unintelligibility; and, the second, that all events are produced by adequate and natural means. The first axiom will be exemplified in contradictory propositions—as a square circle, a round cube, or a part that is greater than its whole. These propositions being impossible, are all unintelligible, and therefore belief can have no application thereto. In all intelligible propositions removed from experience, the faculty of belief has but a very feeble action, as may be exemplified in the inhabitants of the planets. This fact of habitation is both probable and intelligible, but it has no kind of interest, because it is beyond experience, and therefore belief, or disbelief, are of equal indifference. The second axiom, that all events are produced by natural means, is calculated to improve the faculty of belief by guarding it against all kinds of superstitious deception.

The priest who invites the bigot to seek a cure of his disorder at the shrine of a rotten saint, knows the powers of the imagination to promote great changes in the body, and if one cure in a thousand takes place, he laughs at the credulity of the pilgrim, and pockets his money as a purchase of the saint's good will. Like the cup and ball conjuror, who, for a shilling, will tell you the card you thought of, and often for one shilling more will shew you the trick, but this the priest never will do.

The faculty of belief, by attending to the important axiom of all effects being produced by natural causes, would guard against the painful influence of dreams, divinations, and miracles. Predictions of all kinds would be found in the calculation of chances: as thus:—If many millions in Europe have their attentions occupied with dreams and divinations, millions of strange events will be combined in fancy; and if one should correspond with real events in the course of ages, it will be published with alarming wonder, while the false combinations will all be concealed and forgotten, though they exceed the true, as the lands on the shore exceed the mountains on the coast. No miracle has ever yet been performed in history that was not in the power of collusion to effect, except one in Spain of more modern date, which was that of a sexton, who had his wooden leg changed by the

prayers of a priest into solid flesh. I shall not insult your understandings, or waste your time, in suggesting modes by which this trick might be performed, because I think the anecdote itself will be the best antidote against all the errors and stupid credulity of the faculty of belief.

I come now to the conclusion of my topic, which is a rule of discipline to conduct the operations of the faculty of belief, which is simply this :—To appeal the faculty of belief to the criterion of experience.

I shall illustrate the operation of this rule by considering the reports of wonderful events in history or tradition. I will suppose it recorded in the most authentic history that the sun at a given period stood still over the City of Rome. By appealing this event to the rule of discipline for belief, we discover, by experience, that it never moved ; and if this event had been supported by the evidence and testimony of all existing nations at that period, we must then conclude that they were deceived by some meteoric phenomenon.

Again. Suppose it to have been recorded, that the coffin of Mahomet, for many days after the interment, remained suspended in the air, this fact, appealed by belief to experience, is discovered to be contrary to the laws of nature, and therefore false, and if it should be authenticated by the evidence of the whole world, it may be attributed to the virtue of counter magnets, placed above and below it, or to some secret and adequate means in which human intellect, and human happiness, have no concern. The laws of intellectual power have made experience as necessary a criterion to thought as sensation to animal life, and there would be as little harmony in the intellectual world, without its influence, as in the physical world deprived of gravitation, or vision deprived of sight. The dictates of authority having long been permitted to supersede the evidence of experience conducting the arguments of ratiocination, the world has become a great bedlam, in which national boundaries, and sectarian creeds, are the wards of regulations accommodated to the greater or lesser paroxysms of lunacy.

The universal intercourse of commerce and intelligence, by means of the press, have generated, at the present unparalleled crisis of human existence, a general disposition to burst the hospital barriers, and rush into a licentious state of self-government without any appearance of a lucid interval, or convalescency of reason.

All know how to read, while few, or none, know how to think. All have a capacity of simple observation to distinguish good from evil, but none have contemplation to discern the greater and lesser shades of indispensable combination, which constitute the mere criterion and difficult measure of social and individual conduct.

To meet this awful crisis, I have invented a system of education to teach sagacity instead of science, to enable the parent to teach his children how to think that at the age of manhood he may be able to calculate the delicate relations of individual and social life in moral truth, instead of the vain and futile relations of science. If my new system of education should be found correct and practicable, it will have no parallel of beneficence in history; and, like the ark in story, present the last and only refuge to save the world from the threatening deluge of universal ignorance, anarchy, and despotism.

Pedagogues may stuff the memory with all the rubbish of literature, to increase discord with logical controversy of words, not things, while sagacity only can effect the means of concord in teaching a skilful use of the understanding in a discipline of the reason, to discover ends and means, or the theory and practice of human life, the true definition of wisdom.

I shall conclude this lecture on the faculty of belief with the most important apothegm ever formed by human wisdom, viz. belief, or implicit credence in testimony, has no relation whatever to knowledge or science, and is of use only as an occasional, not systematic guide to human conduct as exemplified in this lecture.

The man who shall surrender his reason to authority in the moral science, commits the most atrocious crime that human nature can be guilty of, because it is a dereliction of the use and criterion of the senses, a renunciation of manhood, and a voluntary outlawry of self with nature.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THE receipt of £5 from G. H. is acknowledged, and shall be applied to the proposed purpose. The work would have been advertised extensively before, had we not desired to advertise the removal and new place of business with it. However, whether we move or not shortly, the sum subscribed by G. H. shall be used as a distinct consideration and upon his own terms.

In addition to the *Age of Reason*, we have soiled copies of the *Political Works of Paine* to suit any person's pocket as to price.

NOTICE.

The little God, or Godling, will be ready for delivery in a few days. It will make an appropriate frontispiece for every book that treats of the Jewish or Christian religion. We, in the first instance, shall bind it with that excellent work, "The God of the Jews, or Jehovah Unveiled." This Godling is on a copper plate, has more of the furious characteristics of the Jewish God, than that very modest looking god which we had lithographed, and the price will necessarily be a shilling, *a god for a shilling*; for it will be derogatory to the mock and ludicrous dignity of the gods to sell them painted in fine colours for less than a shilling a piece.

The "Age" newspaper lately boasted that they, the newspapers, had compelled me to desist from exhibiting their god. They produced such an effect, I found the exhibition of the large painting in the window an injury to my business. It brought more gapers than buyers about the doors; and this was the principle reason for the removal. It has continued a prominent object in the interior of the shop and the Godling will have the honour of a front exhibition. The newspapers, instead of suppressing the exhibition, have greatly extended it.

It may be well to repeat, that no offence is intended by this publication. By the God itself, I swear, that useful instruction is the only intent or *quo animo* as the lawyers say, in case of libel.

R. C.